World Vision

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6th January 2003

TO ALL ACBAR MEMBERS

Dear Colleagues,

Please find attached for your information the

Joint Assessment for Ghor Province

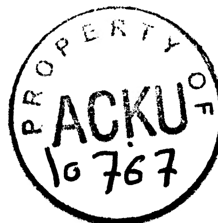
which is a result of the cooperation of CRS, IMC, IRC, Shelter for Life and World Vision in the Western Provinces of Afghanistan.

Your feedback and any comments are highly appreciated.

With our best wishes for a Happy New Year

S. Verderber

Sabine Verderber
Programme Officer
World Vision

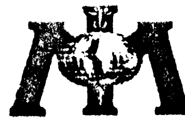













Joint Assessment
Ghor province
Afghanistan
October 2002

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I Executive Summary

Five NGOs, CRS, IMC, IRC, Shelter for Life and World Vision, have been cooperating together over the past five months to develop sustainable, appropriate and high impact programming for Western Afghanistan. As part of the collaboration, the five NGOs conducted a joint assessment between Sept 25 and October 6th 2002. This was carried out with inputs from all five NGOs.

Western Afghanistan has suffered from four years of drought, internal conflict, lack of access, and the degradation of public infrastructure through the neglect of previous regimes. Migration over the past 18 months has seen the IDP population outside urban centres like Herat reach unsustainable levels at its peak. Despite some rain this year and a limited harvest, considerable areas of Western Afghanistan remain food insecure.

Livelihoods in Ghor Province have swung dramatically towards unsustainable forms of income such as NGO assistance, sale of assets, loans and out-labor. This has particularly affected the landless and small landowners. Sustainable and traditional methods of income generation have been reduced to the point of non-viability. The prevalence of unsustainable methods of income generation has resulted in coping mechanisms being exhausted in many communities. Considerable pressure to migrate still exists.

This report seeks to explain and understand the means that communities and individual households use in trying to develop secure and sustainable livelihoods. The objective was to identify traditional livelihoods, and explore how communities have been coping during the drought period. Key issues of concern included relationships between food security, income and debt. Through this knowledge, the agencies aimed to understand the major issues involved in building sustainable livelihoods.

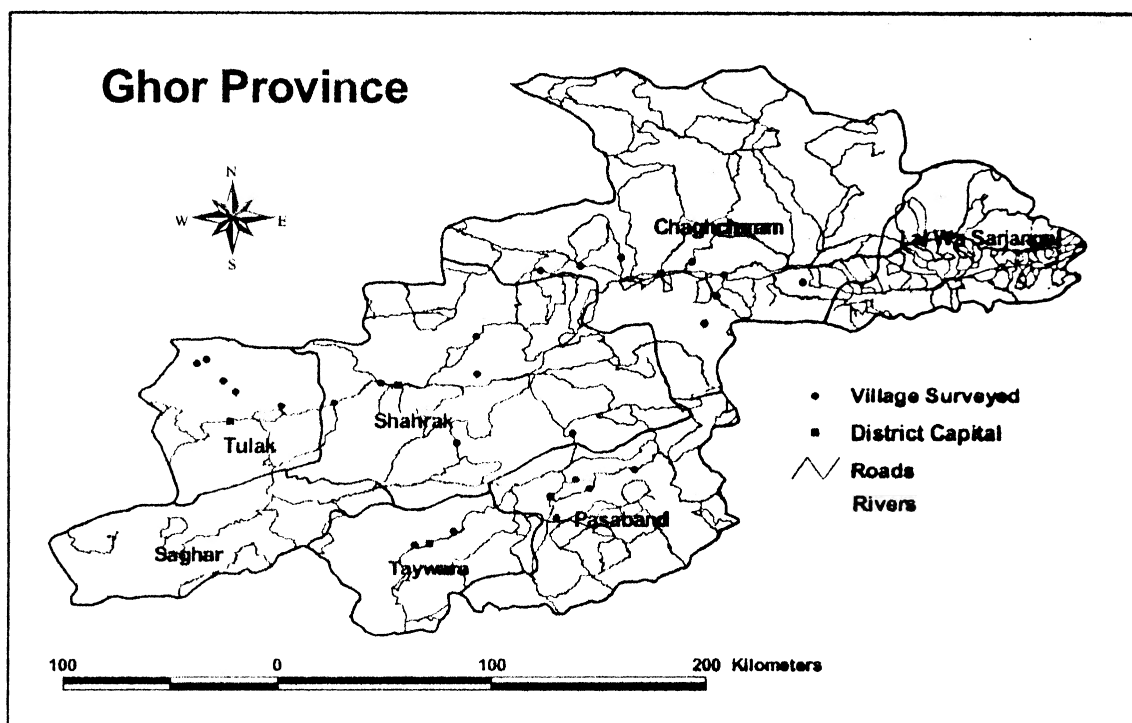
II Method

Ghor province was targeted as a needy province that is currently under serviced by NGOs and from which data is lacking. Ghor is made up of seven districts: Tulak, Sharak, Pasaband, Taiwara, Chaghcharan, Saghar and Lal-o-Sar Jangal. The first five of these districts were included in the assessment.

Ghor is one of the most isolated provinces in Afghanistan. The terrain is comprised of a number of valley complexes ranging from narrow mountain valleys to more open valleys at lower elevations. Accessibility is extremely difficult due to very poor roads and the natural barriers formed by mountain passes on key access routes throughout the province. Access to large areas within the province has been unreliable and sporadic in recent winters, complicating relief efforts.

In Ghor most clusters of villages run along valley complexes. Each district has a number of river valleys with relatively high population densities. These valley complexes form distinct geo-zones where the agricultural and trading conditions are similar throughout the area. To obtain an indication of the state of each district, one or two villages were chosen at random from a number of geo-zones. Care was taken to ensure that at least one village with access to a main route and river was selected in each district. This was done to test the assumption that

such communities are less vulnerable. The location of villages included in the assessment are shown on the map below



The assessment pursued two lines of enquiry:

1. Ten Seeds Participatory Rapid Assessment:

Ten seeds is a participatory rapid assessment technique that allows villagers to identify their main income groups, means of livelihood, and spending patterns in a visual way. It was used to provide an overview of food security/livelihood vulnerability in five districts in Ghor, with a particular focus on sustainable versus unsustainable forms of income and expenditure.

Four major socio-economic groups of households were identified:

- Category I - Households with no access to land;
- Category II - Households with access to a small amount of land;
- Category III - Households with access to medium amount of land;
- Category IV - Households with access to a large amount of land.

Tables showing the profile of each district broken down by land category and income/ spending source are presented in Annex 2

2. District Governor Survey

Another assessment team visited district centres. District Governors were interviewed to ascertain the perceived needs in the districts. This was cross checked with the village visits. Further details of the assessment methodology are given in Annex 1.

III Summary of findings

The assessment findings showed income generation methods in Ghor Province have shifted to the following patterns:

- On average 59% of household income is generated through unsustainable means (NGO assistance, sale of assets, loans and out-labor).

  68.5% of income in landless and small land holding families is generated through unsustainable means; 56% of the population of Ghor falls within this class.

  49% of income in medium to large land holding families is generated through unsustainable means; 44% of the population of Ghor falls within this class.

- The survey concludes that despite improved rainfall within Ghor this year, the districts visited are still struggling to recover from the past years of drought and a significant food gap remains this year. The food gap stems primarily from the low agriculture production. The low harvest is linked with reduced stocks of seeds and limited access to animal traction, compounded in many areas by continued inadequate water supplies.

- Livestock levels remain drastically reduced across the districts surveyed. This source of income had been decimated during the drought, as animals died or were sold to purchase basic necessities. The assessment confirms WFP/FAO August crop survey report which indicates a 80 to 90% reduction in livestock. The consortium survey indicates that only 4% of income is currently being generated through livestock activities. Livestock levels remain depressed due to a lack of funds to invest in livestock, as well as a lack of water in some locations. This has had a knock-on effect on other small but important sources of income for rural communities. (Carpet weaving for example is dependent on availability of wool).

- Sale of assets and debt/loans are a significant source of unsustainable income. Sale of assets currently plays a smaller role than debt, as most vulnerable families have previously used them as collateral and lost or outright sold all disposable assets. The alarming aspect of this trend is that landless and small land holding families are now using this year's harvest as collateral for new loans effectively mortgaging their family's food for next year. This perpetuates an unsustainable cycle, and was cited as the primary reason for out migration. If ignored this will continue to exert pressure to migrate in the future.

- Spending patterns show a disproportionate amount of cash being used for food and basic household essentials such as clothes and medicine. This indicates limited ability to repay debt or purchase productive assets, inhibiting a return to self sufficiency.

- Most villages see themselves as dependant on NGO assistance and felt they would be forced to migrate if this did not continue. The sustainability of many communities will be dependant on expanding diversified forms of sustainable income generation.

- Lack of access due to poor road conditions has resulted in a stunting of rural economies, as trade and commerce are unable to reach the area, or the costs involved are prohibitive.

- The absence of workable health services and the widespread incidence of acute illnesses such as TB, malaria, and typhoid leads to unnecessary morbidity and mortality, which further prevents communities from achieving self sufficiency.

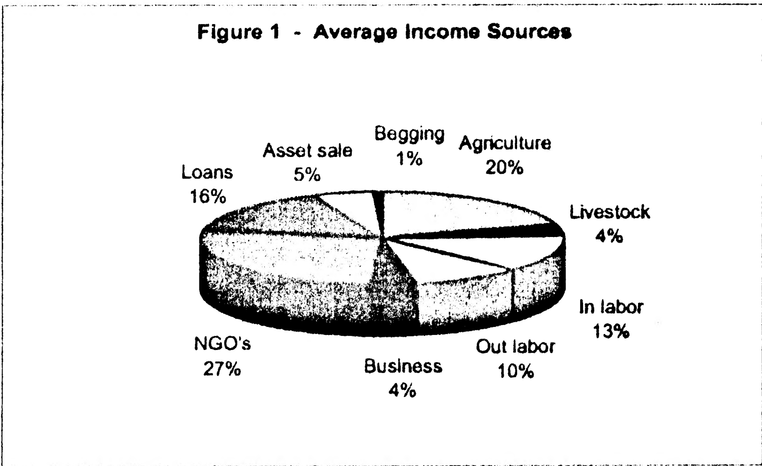
- A top priority identified by all villages throughout the area surveyed was water for drinking, irrigation, and livestock. Additional needs focused on rehabilitation of the traditional agricultural livelihoods and health care. Villages identified restocking of livestock, seed and fertilizer inputs, farm power (oxen or mechanical traction) and improved access to health care as key priorities. Food was reported as a priority need in approximately half of the villages assessed.

- Villages near a main route and with a water supply were not generally better off than villages without those advantages. This shows that not only is agriculture run down, but the district economies are so reduced that not even access to main supply routes and a reasonable water supply is enough to significantly alleviate the vulnerability of those villages.

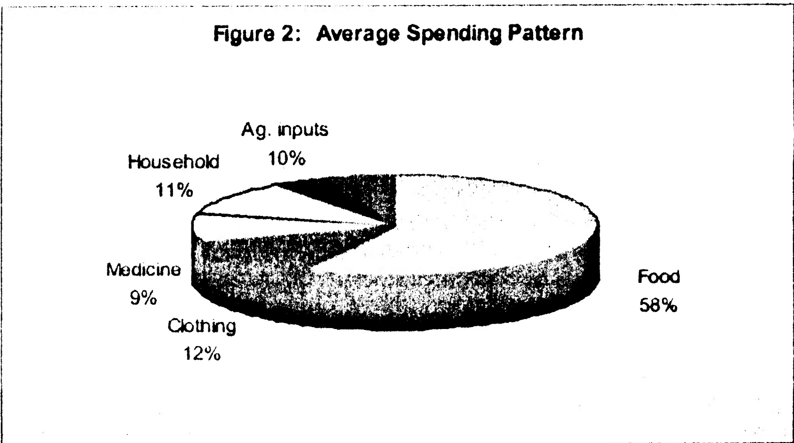
IV Data and discussion

1. Ten Seeds Assessment

Twenty-five villages were surveyed in Ghor. Figure 1 represents the average sources of income for those villages. If income generation is divided into two categories, sustainable (agriculture, livestock, in labor and business) versus unsustainable (NGO assistance, loans, sale of assets, out labor, begging), overall 59% of the income is currently coming from unsustainable sources. On average, NGO assistance is the largest source of income at 27%, followed by agriculture (20%) and loans (16%). In labor and out labor were the next major sources of income while livestock, business, sale of assets and begging were largely insignificant at less than 5% each.



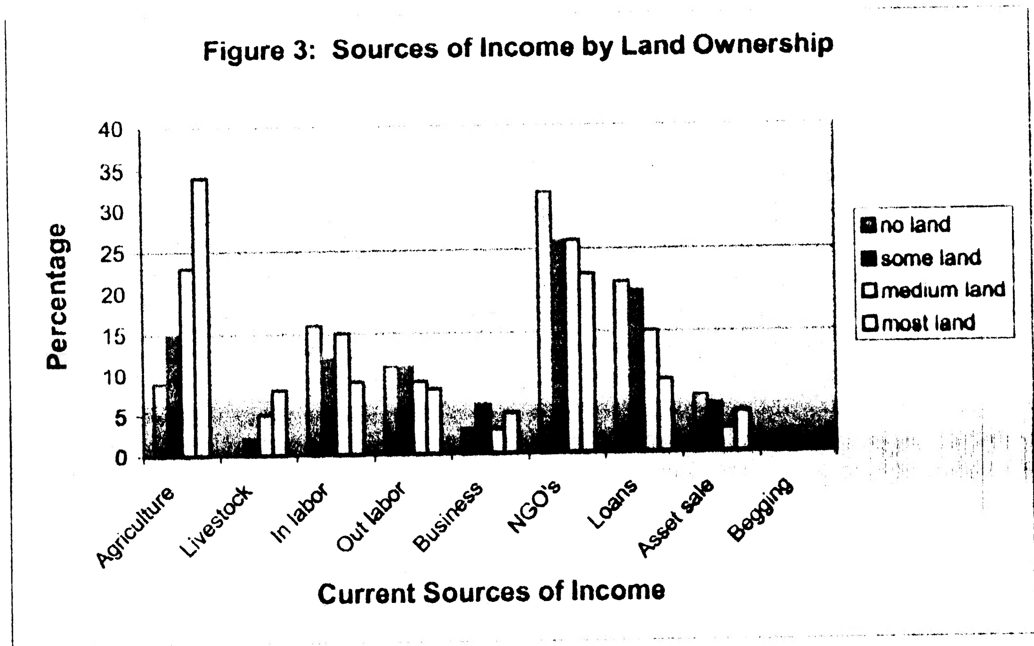
When looking at spending patterns, given in Figure 2, it is evident that food makes up a very large proportion of total spending throughout the districts. On average, basic necessities such as food and medicine make up 67% of spending. This leaves little to be spent on additional household needs or investment in livelihood activities. Overall, people are able to invest only 10% of their income back into agriculture, reducing their ability to break the cycle of debt and poverty.



These income and spending trends indicate that populations within these districts of Ghor remain highly vulnerable. When communities were asked to explain the allocations given, it was noted that several factors come into play. In general, the agricultural situation has remained poor this year, despite increased rains in many locations. This was primarily linked to the lack of adequate seeds and animals for farm traction. Yields have improved over the last year, but the land area planted was insufficient to meet needs. As a result, there will be a food gap this year in most locations.

Livestock would normally be an alternative income source for the poorer section of the population. However, as can be seen from Figure 1, this resource remains largely decimated through out Ghor. Instead, the people within the villages surveyed have become increasingly dependent on unsustainable income sources - primarily NGO assistance and loans. The sale of assets was not noted as a major contributor to income, but most villages stated that this was because people, especially those with fewer assets to begin with, had already sold off livestock and household items. Increasing dependence on loans and NGO assistance, currently providing an average of 43% of income amongst those surveyed, was therefore developing.

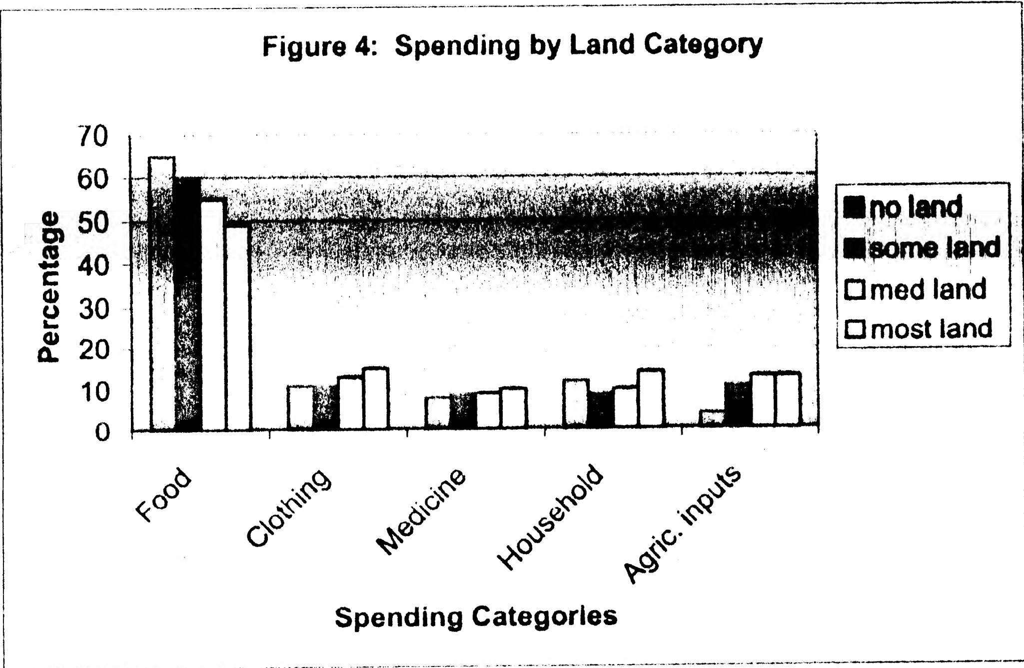
In discussing debt burden, most villages indicated that levels of debt have increased substantially over the past four years. The ability to raise additional loans is dependent on collateral, so families already in debt and with drastically reduced assets face significant pressure to migrate in search of alternate income means. The significant dependence on out labor at 10% of income is worrying, as it is indicative of displacement and population migration. In the areas surveyed, most people that move for 'out labor' do so illegally and often remain in the host country for between 6 and 24 months.



Income patterns often varied by land ownership category. For the villages surveyed, approximately 25% of the population had no arable land. 31% were small land holders who were typically unable to meet a year's food requirements for their family through agricultural production. 28% had a moderate amount of land and 15% had large amounts of land. In a normal year, these families are able to produce enough to meet their food needs.

As shown in Figure 3, the amount of income generated from both agriculture and livestock can be seen to correlate with landholder categories, with income from these sectors increasing with more land. The opposite trend was noted for income from loans and NGOs, with landless and small land owners acquiring more of their income from these sources than larger landowners. Income from the other sources - in labor, out labor, business, sale of assets and begging - was not influenced by land category.

The landless and small land holders were more dependant on unsustainable income sources for their livelihoods, respectively obtaining 73% and 64% of livelihoods through such means. For these land ownership categories, the highest percentage of income came from NGO assistance (32% and 26% respectively), followed by loans (21% and 20% respectively), indicating a strong cycle of dependence and debt for the less wealthy portion of the population. A combination of in labor, out labor and agriculture provided another 35% of income for these two groups. Medium and large landholders received a greater share of their income from agriculture, which accounted for an average of 23 and 34% of their earnings respectively. Even the largest land owner category, however, reported a high dependence on NGO assistance with this making up 22% of their income. Overall they currently obtain 44% of their income from unsustainable sources.



In general, this year's limited harvest primarily had a direct benefit for the medium to large landowners. The smaller landholders and landless were able to share in the harvest through the provision of labor to larger landowners. However, both the harvest and the level of work

it generated were inadequate for the needs in each district. As a result, the situation remains poor this year across all land categories. This is supported by the spending trends, as shown in Figure 4. While the amount spent on basic food and medicine increases somewhat as the amount of land decreases, spending patterns were similar across all land categories. This indicates that all land ownership categories are still experiencing hardship in meeting basic needs this year and are unable to invest in further developing income generation opportunities.

The situation is more extreme for small landowners and the landless. The needs of these populations, however, cannot be addressed in isolation. A significant proportion of the small landowners cannot produce enough through agriculture to cover basic food needs even in a normal year. For them, opportunities for other sustainable income generating opportunities such as livestock, casual day labor or small business are essential. This is even more true for the landless. Increasing the productivity of the medium and large landholders is critical to providing employment opportunities to the small landholder and landless.

The aggregated results of the livelihood questions by district and land category, along with a weighted summary for all districts are presented in Annex 2, Table 1. Significant diversity of circumstances was found during the assessments. Due to this, the table gives a general view of each district and does not show some of the extremes of difficulty experienced by individual villages. Profiles of each of the districts visited are given in Annex 1.

2. District Governor Survey

Interviews were carried out with authorities of three of the five districts visited by the 10 seeds teams to ascertain the adequacy of basic services. Information on a fourth district was obtained from the Provincial Governor. The district populations (families) reported were as follows:

District	Number of families	Notes
Tulak	50,000	Reported by the District Governor.
Shahrak	74,600	Reported by the District Governor.
Chacharan	96,000	Population figures for three of the four sub districts were given by the District Governor.
Pasaband	34,000	Reported by the Provincial Governor.
Total	**254,000**	

Health

The health facilities in the districts visited were inadequate for the needs of the population. In the districts visited there were only three permanent clinics, one in Tulak, one in Sharak and one in Chacharan. In Passaband and one village in eastern Sharak there was a rudimentary clinic but with no permanent building. In Taiwara and Chacharan there was a small hospital in the main town. The number of qualified doctors in the Districts was minimal. Some villages had access to self appointed health worker who had undertaken 3 to 6 months training. Use was also made of faith healers who rely on traditional herbal remedies. Some vaccination was being carried out in Tulak and Sharak. Serious conditions

could not be dealt with in the clinics. Anecdotal evidence showed that seriously ill patients often did not survive attempts to bring them to Herat for treatment due to the poor condition of the roads. The local authorities identified qualified staff and clinic construction as the most important priorities for the health services, and provision of safe drinking water as the most important contributor to health.

Schools

The number of school buildings in Ghor districts is minimal. In Tulak, Sharak, and Chacharan there were 12, 21, and 6 schools respectively. Although some schools are held in tents and education is carried out by religious teachers there is an acute shortage of schools and qualified staff in Ghor, as in Afghanistan generally. The reports of the villagers and requests of the district governors showed high motivation to provide education for children, even when there were no, or limited facilities. The ability of the communities to respond creatively to their problems is dependant on restarting education at the community level.

Roads

The east/west route through Ghor is a key highway connecting Herat Province to the central Provinces and Kabul. The trans-Ghor road runs along the spine of the Safed Koh mountains to the central highlands and on to Kabul. At the district level the economic viability of many of the geo-zones can be significantly improved by selective construction and rehabilitation of this main supply route and secondary routes. This would facilitate trading on a district and inter-district basis. Access to markets would be improved by opening up routes to neighbouring Provinces such as Badghis and Herat. A number of routes have already been surveyed. Principle among these are the main east/west highway from Farsi province through Tulak, Sharak, and Chacheran. This road is over 300 Km long and is a main artery to many of the most needy areas of Ghor. Restoration or construction of all-season roads would make a significant impact stimulating economic activity, reducing vulnerability for many communities.

Note: Poppy cultivation

Poppy cultivation is being used as a coping mechanism by some communities in Ghor. This can be divided into two categories: small scale and industrial. International workers from the NGOs participating in the assessment saw industrial scale cultivation in one of the districts assessed. The extent of industrial cultivation could appropriately be measured in square kilometres rather than hectares. This assessment teams found evidence of small scale poppy growing in sight of main routes in only in Taiwara and Chaghcharan. Areas under cultivation would typically be under a quarter of a hectare. Anecdotal evidence gathered in Pasaband, Chaghcharan, and Taiwara suggested a spread of small scale poppy growing. It is difficult to underestimate the level of anxiety caused by four years of drought. Even a small crop of poppies can generate enough cash to feed a family for a year. Given the circumstances that drought affected Afghans have faced recently it is understandable that some villagers respond to their difficulties by resorting to poppy growing. Program planning will take account of these factors.

V Recommendations

The key need in Ghor is to break the cycle of dependence on unsustainable forms of income (NGO assistance, loans, out labor and sale of assets). Failure to address this need in time to benefit the next harvest will result in unnecessary protraction of vulnerability into 2004. This should be done by increasing access to immediate income and services in the near term, and developing greater diversity of sustainable livelihoods in the medium term. The following are specific recommendations for interventions that will shift the economic balance toward sustainable income activities and aid in the process of rural recovery.

- Cash for work programmes will address debt and basic needs in the short term, particularly where outputs provide public assets such as improved roads and water supplies.
- Immediate agricultural restart, including provision of agricultural inputs and livestock is necessary for rural communities to re-establish basic livelihoods. Agricultural extension work is needed in the medium term to improve farming techniques and efficiency. This will complement Cash for Work programs.
- The development of alternative livelihoods and small businesses in communities is essential to increase income and reduce dependence on agriculture. During normal years most rural families are dependent on agriculture for the largest part of their income (crop production, livestock and labor associated with crop production). When agriculture fails these families are adversely affected as they have not diversified sufficiently into other income generating activities.
- Water continues to be a limiting factor for agriculture in many areas. Targeted assistance with water systems is required. This should aim to improve the access to agricultural water through the rehabilitation and improvement of existing irrigation systems.
- Health services are urgently needed. Every village reported incidences of treatable acute illnesses. Basic health services need to be supplemented with targeted programs to address illnesses such as TB, typhoid and malaria, which currently give rise to unacceptable mortality rates.
- Improvements in drinking water supply, sanitation and health education are necessary. High rates of diarrhoeal diseases were reported. This situation should be addressed through access to safe water, training on the preparation of food and general hygiene, and the provision of sanitation services to prevent water sources becoming contaminated.
- Construction/rehabilitation of primary and secondary roads is essential to improve access to markets and health facilities.

Annex 1: Analysis by District

The purpose of this section is to:

- Describe in more detail the methodology of the assessment.
- Provide an overview of the situation which explores the situation primarily in terms of landholding.
- Provide a short profile for each district. This includes an overview of the district. It goes on to describe the "reference" village and contrast this with the other villages assessed in that district.

A. Methodology

1. Ten Seeds Participatory Rapid Assessment:

Two mobile teams, coordinated by World Vision, visited 25 villages chosen to be representative of areas assessed in each district. The livelihood team used a rapid participatory assessment technique called "Ten Seeds" to provide an overview of food security/livelihood vulnerability in the villages visited.

Ten Seeds assessments were conducted in each of the villages visited. As wide a cross section of the community as possible was asked to take part. Interviews started by asking the number of families in the village and ten stones were used to represent the whole village population. This was divided into landless and those with access to land. The proportion of those with land was then subdivided into those with some land, those with a medium amount of land and those with the most land. Once the population profile based on landholdings had been identified the range of livelihood options for each category of landowner was established. This was followed by a similar exercise, in which the spending patterns of each landowner category were explored.

Significant pressures existed for communities to exaggerate their levels of need during interviews. This was usually done by giving artificially low amounts of land availability. To circumvent this, the categories of land holding suggested were left deliberately subjective. The amounts of land considered "average" for each category were identified later in the interviews.

There were four major socio-economic groups of households identified during the assessment:

- Category I Households with no access to land;
- Category II Households with access to a small amount of land;
- Category III Households with access to medium amount of land;
- Category IV Households with access to a large amount of land.

Issues relating to the changes in circumstances over time were explored verbally. Once livelihoods had been discussed, general questions were asked to ascertain the adequacy of the water supply, existence of schools and clinics, and common illnesses. The health questions

were asked without prompting for any particular response. The replies represent the villagers' view of their problems rather than a check list prompted by the assessors.

Village selection

In Ghor most clusters of villages run along valley complexes forming geo-zones in which the agricultural and trading conditions are similar. To obtain an indication of the state of each district villages were chosen at random from a number of geo-zones. Geo-zones were classified as follows:

1. Villages on main supply route and near a river;
2. Villages remote from a main supply route and/or river.

The distribution of the villages surveyed is shown in the map on page 3. As already mentioned a common assumption made in mapping vulnerability is that villages near a main supply routes and with good water supply are less vulnerable than more remote villages. Villages were randomly selected throughout each district, from each of the types of geo-zone classified above. Care was taken to ensure that at least one village with access to a main route and river was selected in each district.

2. District Governor Survey

Two other mobile teams visited district governors in order to develop a general overview or profile of the district. A semi-structured interview format was used. Main themes explored were needs relating to health, roads, water supply, and schools. This interview was mainly concerned with infrastructure needs of the whole district. The district authorities were also asked to identify geographical areas where needs were high. Where possible this team also met with other humanitarian actors in the area and again sought to identify needs and geographical areas of need through these interviews. Based on the information obtained from the Governor and Humanitarian Actor's interviews the infrastructure team made visits to selected sites within each district. In the villages they selected the conducted interviews with community members to assess their needs. Again a semi-structured interview format was used for this and main themes for the interviews were income, food security, and overall needs. The findings from the governor survey are given above, page 9 and 10.

B. District Profiles

Introduction

The sources of income by district are depicted in Figure 5. As previously noted, dependence on NGO assistance is a running theme within Ghor, with all districts surveyed indicating this as one of the top two sources of income. Loans and Agriculture were the next main categories of income for most districts with the exception of Pasaband, which derived a large portion of income from in-labor. In-labor and Out-labor provided less but still significant revenue for the other four districts, while sale of assets was significant in three of the five districts - Sharak, Chaghcharan, and Taiwara - only. Income from livestock, business, and begging ranged from small to nonexistent across all districts. All the districts showed worrying dependence on unsustainable forms of income.

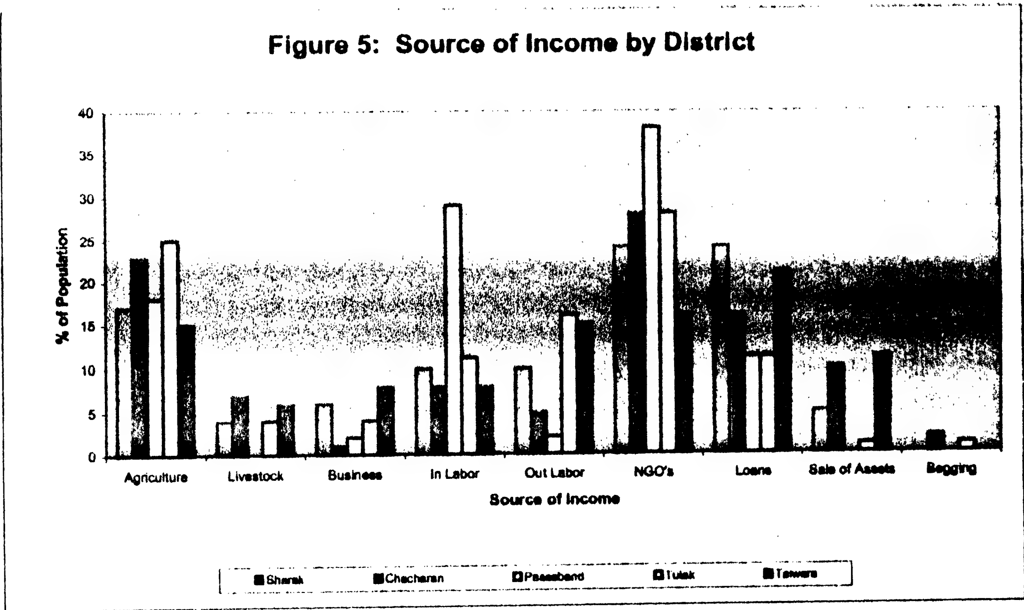
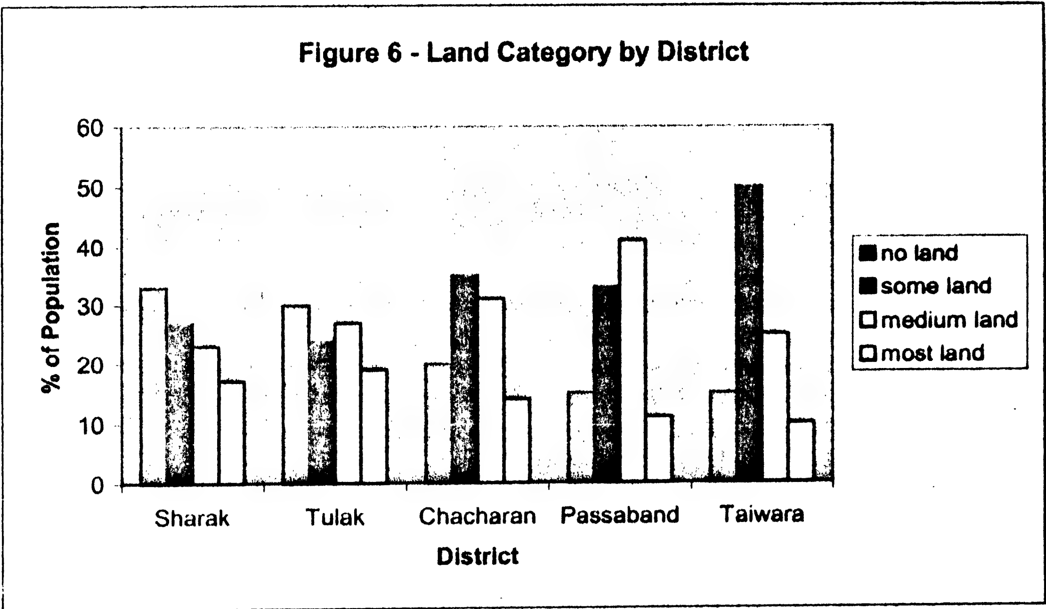


Figure 5: Source of Income by District

Land distribution within the districts is an important factor when evaluating the current conditions within Ghor. Figure 6 shows land distribution patterns throughout the areas surveyed. As can be seen the majority of people have no land or small land holdings. Tulak, Chaghcharan and Pasaband were found to have higher numbers of medium to large landholders than Taiwara and Shahrak - 45%, 46% and 52% respectively. Ownership of land can be used as a measurement for vulnerability.



The amount of income generated from sustainable forms of income increased with size of land holding as shown in the table below.

Land Category	% income from Sustainable sources	% income from Un-sustainable sources
No Land	28	72
Some Land	35	65
Medium Land	46	54
Most Land	56	44

Regardless of land ownership, sustainable agriculture only made up a proportion of income even in a normal year, indicating diversified forms of livelihood restart and support are necessary. Other factors interact with the size of landholdings to determine vulnerability. Villages, when asked about their needs, repeatedly stated that agricultural inputs, livestock, and water were required. As some villagers stated, "Without water there is no point, the land is useless"

There was significant diversity within the districts surveyed. The following gives a brief description of the livelihood and spending conditions in each district. Following that the situation of the "reference" village is described. The reference villages provide a benchmark to show the circumstances of communities that have the advantages of reasonable water supply and access to main supply routes through the district. A summary of the main factors affecting the other villages in each district is then outlined to show variations in circumstances.

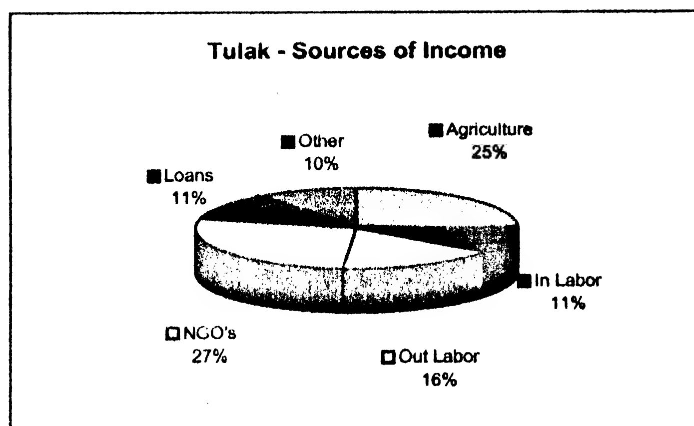
1. Tulak - Overview

Tulak lies on the western edge of Ghor, where the land begins to merge from flat terrain into foothills for the mountains in the central and eastern parts of the province. It borders Farah province to the west and Herat to the north. The road that passes east-west through the district is part of a cross country route to Kabul. Travelling along the main east-west road is reasonable by Afghan standards - a 4x4 vehicle can average up to 30 km/hour on the main road.

The following villages were visited:

Village	Number of Families
Jamya	150
Gaday	63
Tangi Nebat	65
Khajaha	65
Oyun	50

The main income sources for Tulak are shown below.



A high percentage of the population in Tulak (46%) own medium to large tracts of land. As a result, the income from agriculture is the highest among the districts surveyed, at an average of 25% of total revenues. The district also has one of the highest rates of landlessness.

Needs for this portion of the population, combined with relatively easy access in comparison to most parts of Ghor, might explain the relatively high proportions of income from NGO assistance, in labor, and out labor. The district has a relatively low dependence on loans and sale of assets, when compared to other districts. Villagers stated that this was due to these means of support being exhausted in some areas, rather than lack of necessity for extra income. Debt was cited as a main cause of out migration.

In general, spending patterns were close to the norm across the districts surveyed, with over 50% of spending going toward food across all land owner groups and the remainder going toward a combination of clothing, medicine, household items and, to a lesser extent, agricultural inputs.

Village profiles

Khajaha, lying 3 km west of the district town of Tulak, was used as a reference village having the advantages of proximity to a main route and a river. Of the other four villages: Jamya and Gadaya lie in major valley complexes running east-west, one and two hours to the north of Tulak district center respectively; Tangi Nebat lies in the hills between Gadaya and Tulak district centre; and Oyun lies a little to the north of the main route through Tulak to Sharak, at the eastern edge of the district.

Reference village: Khajaha

Khajah sprawls along the river valley running 2.5 Km east to west and 3 km north to south. It has a current population of 133. It must be noted that over the past four years significant out migration has taken place with 65 families having left. Only 16 families have returned. The village was found to have diversified livelihood sources: agriculture, livestock, in labour, out labour, business, NGO assistance, loans, sale of assets, and begging contributing to household income.

The land ownership profile of Khajaha was a follows:

- No land - 30 %;
- Some land - 40 %;
- Medium land - 20%;
- Most land 10%.

Land holdings showed that those with no land and with small landholdings do not have enough land to meet annual food needs at present production rates - even in a normal year with sufficient water. Agriculture made up 17.5% of income this year, with loss of livestock and low seed stocks were cited as reasons for low food availability. Business activities made only a minimal contribution to livelihood at under 5%. Loans were a significant proportion of income at 25% across all categories of land ownership. NGO assistance made up 10% of income across all categories and sale of assets and begging was used by the poorest two categories in the past year.

Other villages in Tulak

The other four villages assessed in Tulak showed considerable variation to the situation in Khajaha. Land ownership varied between villages. One village was found to have almost equal proportions of land ownership across all categories, while another was found to have very high concentration of land ownership in the hands of a few villagers. All the villages reported a serious food gap this year: the landless and small landholders in these villages reported a food gap as high as 9 months. The survey teams estimated that the medium and large landowners could cover their food needs in a normal year. In two of the villages the small landowners were estimated to have the capacity to cover their food needs for approximately nine months during a normal year. Business contributed very little to overall income.

All villages reported significant dependence on NGO inputs this year. This was as much as 43% in one village. A dependence on remittances from out labour this year was also reported by all villages - this ranged from 5% to 21%. Sale of assets ranged from 0 to 4%. Although

relatively low dependence on sale of assets was reported, this was due to most individuals having already exhausted this source of income. Many families were now using loans/debt as an income source. Debt was cited as a main cause of out migration by many.

Health

TB was reported in all villages. Typhoid, malaria, and diarrhoea were reported in three of the five villages, with related deaths reported in four of the five villages. None of the villages visited had a clinic.

Schools

Only one village, Oyun, had a school of its own, but this was for boys only. The community wanted a school for girls as well. Kahaja village sent its children to the district town for education, while the other villages said boys and girls go to the Mullah for education.

Water

Water sources were a key determinant of village well being. Anecdotal evidence of the water table dropping was given in one of the five villages.

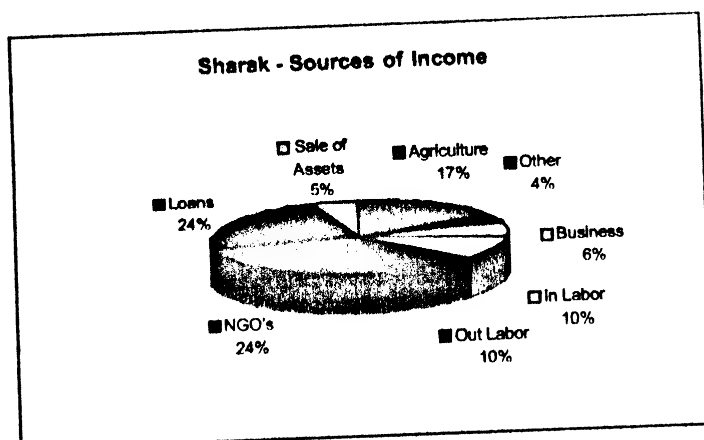
2. Sharak – Overview

Shahrak district lies east of Tulak and is semi arid. Most of the district comprises of high hills with isolated valley complexes. The north of Sharak is mountainous and is effectively a separate socio-geographic area. Access through Sharak is by an east-west road that passes from Tulak town directly through the district. The main town in Sharak lies in the center of the district and access to it from the west is reasonable. When travelling east from Sharak town, the road deteriorates significantly after 30 km, slowing average speed of a 4x4 to well under 30 km/hour.

Villages assessed included the following.

Village	Number of Families
Khairam	150
Talab	85
Barkhul i Olia	110
Alaquly village	200
Garmaw	200
Dehan I Hasarak	128

Sources of income are given below:



Sharak had the greatest diversity of land ownership, with the highest rate of landlessness (33%) and second highest for large land ownership (17%). As a result, income sources tended to be quite diverse. The average percentage of income derived from agriculture for the landless was one third that of the largest landowners. Partially as a result, of the large landless population, the average income from agriculture is lower than in most of the other districts. Villages cited lack of seed and livestock as major problems for agricultural production.

Loans are very significant for all land categories except the largest land owners, indicating that the debt cycle is being exacerbated. There was a small amount of business, mostly benefiting lower land categories. In labor and Out labor each accounted for 10% of income, close to the provincial average, and was quite steady across all land categories. NGO assistance and sale of assets made up remaining income. Both were close to the average for

the province, with sale of assets steady across land categories and NGO assistance increasing slightly as land holdings shrank. In general, these were steady across land categories.

Village profiles

Reference Village: Khairam

Khairam lies on the main road just inside the western border of Sharak. It has a population of 150 families this year. A high number of families, between 50 and 60, left over the past 4 years, of whom 20 have now returned. Land ownership was as follows:

- No land - 40%;
- Some Land - 20%;
- Medium Land - 10 %;
- Most land - 30%.

Agriculture accounted for only 10% of income for the lowest three categories of landowner and only 20% for the largest landowners. Livestock provided even less income; 10% was the maximum income reported from this source.

Despite its advantaged location the village reported some dependence on NGO assistance and out labor - 9% and 14% respectively. Loans were a high source of livelihood and sale of assets amounted to 15% of income for all landowners. The landless had only a 5% income from sale of assets this year due to having already exhausted this coping mechanism over the past four years. The village reported a food gap for this year. The landless had less than three months food supplies. Small landholders had approximately three months food suppliers. Medium Landholders reported five months food supplies, and large landholders reported seven months food supplies.

Villagers reported that the food gap resulted from drought and consistent dropping of the water table. Villagers also commented that the only reason that families that left have returned is because of "NGO help". Despite the problems with water supply the village reported that in a normal year the highest two categories of landowner (medium and large land holdings) could produce a surplus and that even small landowners could produce up to 9 months food.

Other villages

Talab and Barkhul-i-Olia were away from main routes and had only seasonal water in the river. Although land ownership patterns were different in these villages both reported very high dependence on NGO assistance - 48% and 30 % respectively. Both reported very high food gaps for the current year with the large landowners producing only 4 months food and the landless 1 months food, or less. Villagers reported that this was because they had no seed stocks to plant. Neither village had income from livestock as this resource had been sold off over the past 4 years. Only one of the two villages had income from out-labor. In-labor was limited in both cases to approximately 10%. Villagers reported that the landowners in both villages could be self sufficient in food in a normal year. This was dependent on livestock being restored and seed stocks replenished. This year there was a moderate amount of use of loans.

Alaquly village is very remote from main routes and was the first village visited with evidence of small scale poppy production. Although income from agriculture and livestock was low 6% and 2.5%, the village confirmed the ability of all categories of landowner to cover food needs once seed stocks and livestock were replenished. Without livestock the landless were reported to have a food gap of 5 months and the largest landowners would be have a food gap of at least 2 months in a normal year. Loans were unusually high in this village, accounting for 40% of income across all categories this year. Out-labor also was nearly 18 % for the village and NGO assistance was 10 %.

In the other two villages Garmaw and Dehan-i-Hasarak the situation was found to be similar. Income from agriculture was 25% and livestock around 7%. Both had support from in-labor and out-labor. One village had a high reliance on NGO assistance and loans - 30% and 17% respectively. For the other village this was inverted with NGO assistance providing 10% of income and loans providing as much as 30% of their income. Both villages estimated that the largest two categories of landowners could generate their own food needs in a normal year. The small landowners could produce 9 months and the landless 6 months in a normal year. Water sources in 3 of the 6 villages showed signs of depletion of ground water.

Health
TB, typhoid, malaria, and diarrhoea were reported in all villages. Deaths from cholera were mentioned in one village. None of the villages had a clinic.

Water
In two of the four villages wells or springs had dried up in the previous year.

Schools
There were no school buildings in any of the villages visited.

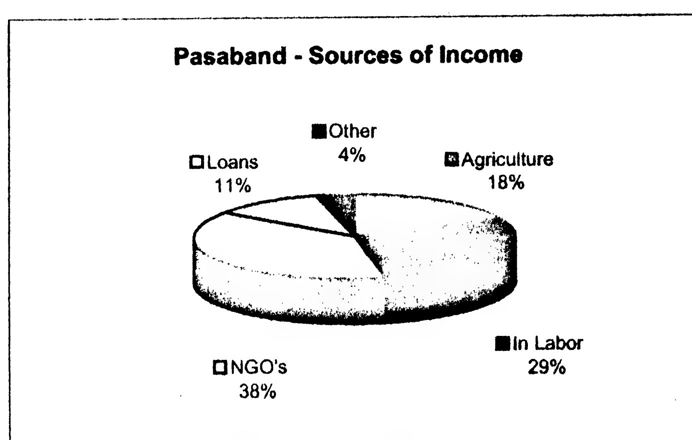
3. Pasaband – Overview

Pasaband, lying to the south of Sharak, is semi arid and mountainous. Access to the district is from the eastern half of Sharak along extremely poor roads. Roads deteriorate markedly east and south of Sharak town, slowing travel from the north of the province.

Four villages were surveyed:

Village	Number of Families
Garmawak	60
(Sari) Obutu	150
Angoorak	56
Shor Abak	70

The breakdown of sources of income are given below.



Pasaband had very low percentages of landless and large landholders. Instead, landowners tended to have small to medium size holdings. Diversity of income sources was quite limited, with only four significant factors reportedly contributing to family revenue. The largest income source was NGO support, which was the highest out of all districts, ranging up to 48% for the landless. Agriculture averaged 18% of income, but this was largely due to the landless obtaining no income from this source. For other land categories, agricultural income was on par or better than that found in other districts.

Another 29% of income came from in labor, which was extremely important for the landless and small landowners, accounting for up to 40% of income. Even the largest landowners reported in labor as significant at 25% of their income. This may be related to its proximity to large poppy production areas in southern Afghanistan.

Loans were also reported, but at relatively low levels compared to other districts, with villagers stating that this stemmed from a lack of assets to use as collateral. There was very little out labor or business. No sale of assets or livestock income was reported at all as these means of income had been exhausted in past years.

Village profiles

Reference Village: Shor Abak

Shor Abak is on a main route running south from the district town. The land ownership was made up as follows.

- No land - 0 %;
- Some land - 30 %;
- Medium land - 50 %;
- Most land - 20 %.

Unusually, no landless were reported in this village but agriculture made up only 17.5% of income across all land categories. There was a significant amount of in-labor at 17.5%. Livestock in the village had become so diminished over the past 4 years that no income was attributed to this income source this year. Business in the village only generated 3.8% of income. Despite the fact that everyone possessed some land the village still reported a relatively high dependence on NGO help for this year. A 40% dependence on NGO help was found for the smallest landowners; this dropped to 30% for large landowners. Again there was some dependence on out-labor for all categories of villager. Under normal circumstances the amount of land held by each category of landowner was enough to provide for the food needs for at least a year. This town lies near a poppy cultivation area and showed the benefits of that income. The village reported some difficulty with water supply and this limited the yield from irrigated crops.

Other villages in Pasaband

In the other villages surveyed in Pasaband - Garmawak, (Sari) Obutu, and Angoorak, landownership was almost evenly divided amongst villagers. No income was attributed to livestock for any village surveyed reflecting the drastic reductions in livestock levels over the past four years. Sale of assets was not present in any of the villages surveyed either as this means of generating income had been exhausted in the past four years. Out-labor was cited as a source of income in only 1 of these 3 villages.

In a normal year, the landed population in two of the three villages could produce enough food for themselves. Income from loans was the lowest reported in all the districts surveyed. The availability of loans was depressed as a result of the lack of assets to use as collateral. One village gave indications of the dropping level of the water table. Local information identified the eastern end of the district as the most needy. There was anecdotal evidence of poppy cultivation in the southern part of the district.

Health
TB was present in all villages. Malaria was reported in three of the four villages.

Schools
Only one village was found to have a school. In the other villages children went to the Mullah

Water
In two of the 4 villages sources of water had completely dried up over the past year.

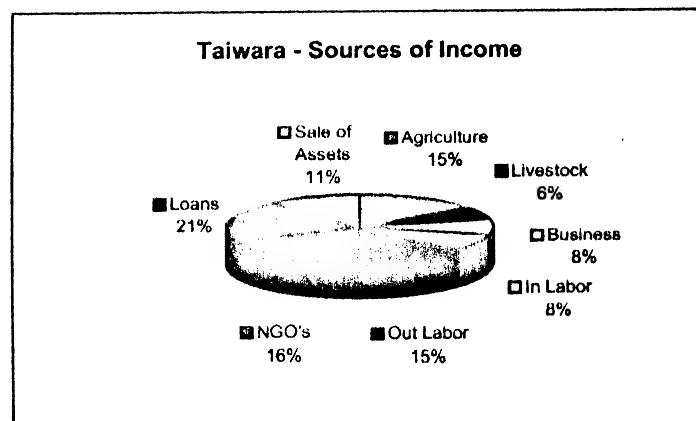
4. Taiwara - Overview

Taiwara lies west of Pasaband and south of Sharak. The district is transected east/west by a ridge of mountains. Road quality is as poor as eastern and southern Sharak and Pasaband.

Two villages were surveyed:

Village	Number of Families
Gala Chashma	60
Narmi	150

The spread of income is given below.



50% of Taiwara is made up of small landholders. Similar to Pasaband, the district has a low percentage of both landless and large landholders. Unlike Pasaband, however, populations within Taiwara indicated a wide variety of income sources. The district had a low percentage of income from agriculture. This may be partially due to the large number of small landholders, which even in normal years are not able to meet their full nutritional needs from agricultural production. Agricultural revenue by each land category, however, was also the lowest among the districts as well. 22 % of income was generated through in labor, business, and livestock.

While still a significant portion of income, the percentage of income from NGOs was the lowest among the districts. Instead, loans and sale of assets assumed more prominence than in other districts, as they were used to provide necessary income supplements. Both were very significant income sources for the landless, making up 30% and 20% of their revenue respectively. Out labor was also quite significant, indicating that a large portion of the population has already migrated in search of better income opportunities.

Village profiles

Reference Village: Gala Chashma

Gala Chashma, is located approximately 5 km west of Ghor town, the district center of Taiwara.

- No land - 0 %;
- Some land - 60 %;
- Medium land - 30 %;
- Most land - 10 %.

Unusually, there were no landless in this village. Some income was available from livestock for the medium and large landowners but the level of livestock ownership had dropped dramatically over the past four year. There were very limited opportunities for in-labor reported. Sale of assets was found to have been all but exhausted as a coping mechanism over the past four years. The village reported a food gap of 8 months across all categories of landowners for this year and a food gap of around 6 months for the small landowners in a normal year. Despite this large food gap assistance from NGOs was only reported as making up 10% of income for all landowners. However, this must be viewed against the level of debt reported in the village - over 50% of the village reported that it will take over 2 years of pay off their debt, if they get a reliable source of income. In addition to these problems there was also evidence of reduction in the water table. Three out of the six wells in the village had stopped producing water in the past year.

Narmi

The other village surveyed had the following land ownership profile: Landless 30%; Small landowners 40%; Medium landowners 20%; and Large landowners 10%. Agriculture and livestock only accounted for 10 and 6.3 % of livelihood over in the village. The village reported an unusually large food gap of 9 months for the small landholders and extremely limited production in normal years. The survey teams estimated that the small landowners would be able to produce about 9 months food from agricultural production in a normal year and that the largest landowners would be able to produce surplus. Small scale poppy cultivation was seen to be taking place in the center of the village. The poppy plots were under a quarter of a hectare. Loans made up 30% of income this year for the landless. Lack of an adequate water supply was a major issue in the village. Dependence on NGO assistance was reported at 20% of income across all categories of landowners.

Health

TB, malaria, typhoid, and diarrhoea were reported in both villages. One village was only 5km from the main town which had a small hospital.

Schools

Both villages surveyed had schools. One school in the main town and the other had tents provided by UNICEF.

Water

The water table was found to be dropping and in one village a third of the wells had dried up this year. In the other village water conservation was necessary for survival.

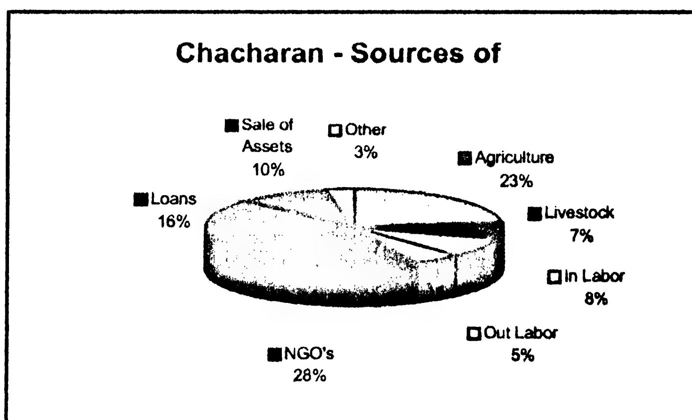
5. Chaghcharan - Overview

Chaghcharan, covers the mountainous eastern half of Ghor and is its largest district. Eight villages were surveyed in Chaghcharan. Assessments were carried out to the east north and south of Chaghcharan town and also in the village concentrations to the north west of Chaghcharan town.

The villages surveyed were:-

Village	Number of Families
Katersume	40
Somach	65
Sia Sang	30
Qutos	300
Badgak	300
Miyanna Bam	120
Barrakhana	90
Nangaabaad	15

The sources of income were as follows.



Chaghcharan is primarily made up of small to medium landholders, with these categories making up approximately 65% of the population. The remainder is divided fairly evenly between the landless and largest landholders. Similar to Taiwara, there was a large diversity of income sources.

The largest source of income was NGO assistance, accounting for 25 to 30% of income for all categories of land ownership. Agriculture was the next main income source, ranging from 9% for the landless up to 36% for the largest land owners. In comparison to the other districts, agricultural income was consistently on the high end for all landowners. In general, however, agricultural production was still well below the norm, with villagers citing lack of seed and difficulty with water supply as main constraints. In labor was low in comparison to other districts as well, following a similar pattern to Sharak. Livestock as an income source was the most significant in Chaghcharan, but was still very low at 7%, and primarily affected only the two larger groups of landowners.

Loans and sale of assets comprised the next major sources of income. In general, loans were average for the areas surveyed and were primarily used by small landholders and landless. There was a higher reliance on sale of assets, however, when compared to other districts, and this remained consistent across land ownership categories. Chaghcharan is the most remote district of those surveyed, and out labor made up a very small percentage of income.

Village profiles

Reference Village: Badgak

Badgak lies about 30 km east of Ghor town. It is on a river and a main route. The land ownership was as follows:

- Landless - 10%:
- Small Landowners - 40%;
- Medium Landowners - 30%;
- Large Landowners - 20 %.

Agriculture accounted for 25% of income this year and livestock a further 12.5 %. The villagers saw themselves as having a substantial food gap this year ranging from 9 months for the landless to 4 months for the large landowners. Under normal conditions they said only the small landowners and landless would have a food gap of 2 and 3 months respectively. The village had suffered a 60% reduction in income from livestock since the beginning of the drought. There was no income reported from small business. On average loans accounted for 17.5% of income for all categories of landowners with the exception of the large landowners. In this village the largest landowners did not have any loans. Sale of assets was used by the small landowners and landless to survive and begging was necessary for some of the landless. Reliance on NGO assistance accounted for 20% of income for all categories of villagers. There was some evidence of poppy cultivation in the village.

Other Villages in Chaghcharan

The situation in the other villages assessed in Chaghcharan varied considerably

The two villages to the south of the district town Katersume, Somach showed a very high dependence on NGO assistance this year - approximately 50% of income across all categories of villager. Limited agriculture was found to have taken place reaching a maximum of 20% in any category. Income from livestock was severely reduced, accounting for only 20% of income in one land category of villager. Loans and sale of assets were of restricted use as a coping mechanism due to villagers having exhausted these means of income already and no longer being considered creditworthy.

Three villages surveyed to the north of Chaghcharan town: Sia Sang, Qutos, and Miyanna Barn, showed better income from agriculture (17-35%) and some income from livestock. Despite this there was considerable dependence on NGO help, with this source providing between 15% and 30%of villagers income. Income from loans ranged from 10% to 27% and sale of assets was found to account for between 10% and 20% of peoples income. One

village of the three had little diversity of income and had no income from out-labor, in-labor or livestock. Livestock had been decimated in all three villages over the past 4 years. Lack of seed stocks and difficulties with water supply were cited as serious problems. The survey team estimated that landowners in two of the three villages could produce enough food in a normal year to cover food needs if the necessary inputs (seeds, livestock, access to water) were available.

The remaining two villages Barrakhana and Nangaabaad lie to the northwest of the district town and south of the main route into Northern Shahrak. They showed slightly more diversified income sources but again displayed a high dependence on NGO assistance averaging 27.5% over all land categories this year. Agriculture and livestock accounted for between 30% and 40% of villager's income. Livestock had been severely diminished as a source of income and now accounts of only 10% of income for all categories of landownership. Loans and sale of assets accounted for between 10% and 15% of income for both towns.

Health
TB and diarrhoea were reported in all villages. Malaria and typhoid were reported in all but two of the villages

Water
Water supply came from springs, rivers, wells and karizes.

Schools
Some form of school was found to be present in all but one village.

Annex 2 Income and spending tables

Table 1: Income by District and Land Category District

District	Land Categories	No of Families[1]	% of population	Income Agriculture	Livestock	In Labor[2]	Business	% Sustain - able income	Out Labor[3]	NGO help	Loans	Sale of Assets	Begging	% Unsustain- able income
Tulak	No Land	138	30	12	0	13	4	29	19	35	13	3	1	71
	Some Land	111	24	19	3	13	3	38	18	29	13	1	1	62
	Medium Land	124	27	25	6	13	3	47	16	26	11	0	0	53
	Most Land	88	19	44	8	5	5	61	11	20	8	0	0	39
	Average			*25*	*4*	*11*	*4*	44	*16*	*28*	*11*	*1*	*1*	56
Sharak	No Land	291	33	9	0	12	8	28	10	28	28	4	1	72
	Some Land	233	27	14	1	10	6	31	9	24	30	6	0	69
	Medium Land	204	23	18	3	10	3	35	12	23	25	5	0	65
	Most Land	146	17	28	12	8	6	54	8	20	12	6	0	46
	Average			*17*	*4*	*10*	*6*	37	*10*	*24*	*24*	*5*	*0*	63
Pasaband	No Land	50	15	0	0	40	0	40	0	48	13	0	0	60
	Some Land	109	33	16	0	30	1	48	1	40	11	0	0	53
	Medium Land	139	41	26	0	23	4	53	3	34	11	0	0	48
	Most Land	38	11	30	0	25	3	58	5	30	8	0	0	43
	Average			*18*	*0*	*29*	*2*	49	*2*	*38*	*11*	*0*	*0*	51
Taiwara	No Land	32	15	10	0	10	0	20	10	20	30	20	0	80
	Some Land	105	50	10	3	3	15	30	20	15	25	10	0	70
	Medium Land	53	25	15	10	15	5	45	15	15	20	5	0	55
	Most Land	21	10	25	10	5	10	50	15	15	10	10	0	50
	Average			*15*	*6*	*8*	*8*	36	*15*	*16*	*21*	*11*	*0*	64
Chacharan	No Land	192	20	9	3	14	0	25	9	29	19	11	6	75
	Some Land	336	35	19	4	8	2	33	3	29	20	11	3	67
	Medium Land	300	31	29	9	8	1	48	4	29	13	7	0	53
	Most Land	132	14	36	11	4	1	51	3	26	10	10	0	49
	Average			*23*	*7*	*8*	*1*	39	*5*	*28*	*16*	*10*	*2*	61
Totals	No Land	759	25	9	0	16	3	28	11	32	21	7	2	72
	Some Land	936	31	15	2	12	6	35	11	26	20	6	1	65
	Medium Land	840	28	23	5	14	3	46	9	26	15	3	0	54
	Most Land	445	15	34	8	9	5	55	8	22	9	5	0	45
		2980		*20*	*4*	*13*	*4*	41	*10*	*27*	*16*	*5*	*1*	59

1. The average size of family is taken to be six. 2. In Labor refers to labor within Afghanistan. 3. Out Labor refers to movements across an international border in order to earn money.

Table 2: Spending Patterns by District and Land Category

District	Land categories	Spending				
		Food	Clothes	Medicine	Household	Ag input
		%	%	%	%	%
Tulak	No Land	66	11	11	12	0
	Some Land	54	14	13	15	4
	Medium Land	56	15	12	13	4
	Most Land	53	14	10	18	6
	Average	***57***	***13***	***12***	***14***	***4***
Sharak	No Land	65	14	8	8	5
	Some Land	51	16	13	8	13
	Medium Land	52	17	11	7	14
	Most Land	46	16	14	8	16
	Average	***53***	***16***	***11***	***7***	***12***
Pasaband	No Land	80	10	5	5	0
	Some Land	70	9	5	5	11
	Medium Land	66	9	5	5	15
	Most Land	63	10	5	5	18
	Average	***70***	***9***	***5***	***5***	***11***
Taiwara	No Land	40	10	10	20	20
	Some Land	50	10	10	10	20
	Medium Land	40	10	15	10	25
	Most Land	35	15	10	15	25
	Average	***41***	***11***	***11***	***14***	***23***
Chaghcharan	No Land	67	12	8	13	1
	Some Land	56	11	9	9	15
	Medium Land	44	16	9	10	21
	Most Land	49	17	9	11	14
	Average	***54***	***14***	***9***	***11***	***13***
All districts	No Land	65	11	8	12	4
	Some Land	60	11	9	9	11
	Medium Land	55	13	9	10	13
	Most Land	49	15	10	14	13
	Average	***57***	***12***	***9***	***11***	***10***